

## **Syllabus for SCIE258 (Topics in History of Science)**

### **The history of science, technology and culture through the lens of London and the United Kingdom**

Fall 2017

Dickinson College

Instructor: John MacCormick

#### **Goals**

Students will

- critically analyze the history of scientific and technological ideas relevant to sites throughout London, Bath and the surrounding areas;
- develop an understanding of the mutual interaction between scientific ideas and cultural, political, and social influences;
- deepen their ability to write clearly while presenting a combination of historical and technical ideas

#### **When and where**

- Three weeks of site visits, study, and research based in London and Bath prior to the UEA semester
- Class meetings during the fall UEA semester to be scheduled as necessary

#### **Books**

The following are required texts for the course:

- *Science: A History* or *The Scientists: A History of Science Told Through the Lives of Its Greatest Inventors* by John Gribbin. Any edition of this book is acceptable. It was published under the first title ("*Science: A History*") in the UK by Penguin and under the second title ("*The Scientists...*") in the US by Random House.
- *Longitude: The True Story of a Lone Genius Who Solved the Greatest Scientific Problem of His Time* by Dava Sobel. Any edition is acceptable.
- *The Ghost Map: The Story of London's Most Terrifying Epidemic – and How it Changed Science, Cities, and the Modern World* by Steven Johnson. Any edition is acceptable.

Electronic or printed versions of these books are fine. You must have all texts available during all segments of the course (London, Bath, Norwich).

## Assessment and grading

Final grade will be based on homework assignments (HW1 to HW5) and the separate category of Participation, Attendance and Engagement (PAE) as follows:

	% of final grade	due dates
HW1: Longitude (summer)	10%	HW1: Aug 1
HW2: Ghost map (summer)	5%	HW2: Aug 16
HW3a-d: Timeline (summer, London+Bath)	5%	HW3a: Aug 18 HW3b: Sep 10 HW3c: Sep 17 HW3d: Nov 28
HW4a-d: Research paper (summer, London+Bath, UEA)	HW4a: 5% HW4b: 10% HW4c: 15% HW4d: 20%	HW4a: Aug 26 HW4b: Oct 12 HW4c: Nov 16 HW4d: Dec 7
HW5a-e: Site-based activities (London+Bath)	15%	See course schedule
PAE	15%	

The instructor may change the number and value of the assignments and the due dates, but will make every effort to communicate any changes clearly, fairly, and with ample warning. Details of the PAE grade will be explained on an ongoing basis and will incorporate items such as attendance, punctuality, reading quizzes, Moodle discussion participation, and active participation in site visits. All assignments are due at 11:59 PM UK time on the due date, unless otherwise specified. (Exception: summer assignments are due at 11:59 PM US Eastern time on the due date.) Assignments should be submitted to Moodle in PDF format unless otherwise specified.

Final scores will be converted to grades according to the following thresholds (or possibly more generous thresholds): 93%=A; 90%=A-; 87%=B+; 83%=B; ... ; 60%=D-.

## Plagiarism, copying, and collaborating

The College's standard policy on plagiarism applies and you should be familiar with it. Unless an assignment specifically states otherwise, all work should be your own.

## Accommodations

The instructor will follow college policy on [accommodations](#) for students who need them.

## **Late Work Policy**

Each student is permitted a total of four no-penalty days of lateness for submitted work over the entire semester; every subsequent day of lateness incurs up to a 25% penalty for the late assignment. Late days can be used only in whole day units. Accounting for late days is mostly via an honor system: students should keep count of their late day usage. To use one or more late days on a given assignment, state clearly at the start of your submission how many days you are using and the total used so far in the semester.

## **Acknowledgement**

This syllabus and many of the other course materials are derived from earlier versions of the course taught by previous directors of Dickinson's Norwich science program. The instructor is especially grateful to Professors Grant Braught and David Kushner for permission to reuse and adapt their materials.